

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 17, 2004 has been received and carefully considered. The above amendments and the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to all issues raised in the Office Action. No new matter has been introduced.

The applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claim 8 contains allowable subject matter. In addition, although not rejected or discussed in the body of the Office Action, claim 11 was indicated to have been objected to on the Office Action Summary sheet (see, item 7 under Disposition of Claims); accordingly, it is presumed that the Examiner also considers the subject matter of claim 11 to be allowable over the prior art of record.

New independent claim 12 combines and includes the full subject matter of original claims 1 and 8, whereas new independent claim 22 combines and includes the full subject matter of original claims 1 and 11. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 12 and 22, together with their dependent claims, are in immediate condition for allowance without further discussion.

Claims 1-7 and 9-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over, Ochs (U.S. Patent No. 3,982,558).

Claim 1, as amended, incorporates the full subject matter of original claims 2, 3 and 5, and sets forth that the elastic

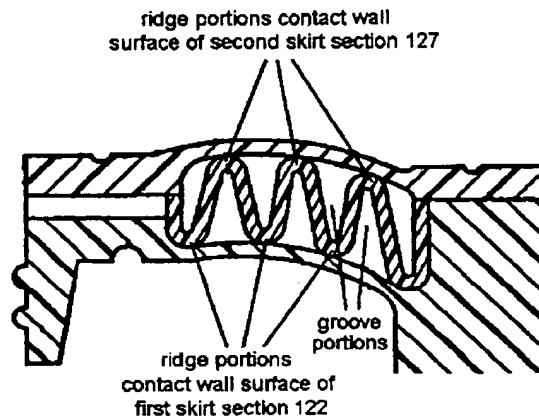
member comprises a buffering spring member (126) which is corrugated with a plurality of corrugations.

The term "corrugated" has a clear dictionary meaning¹, and moreover, this term has been defined in the present specification to imply that the spring member 126 "is bent in a wavy form at a plurality of positions" extending from an inner circumferential side toward an outer circumferential side of the first diaphragm 88 and the second diaphragm 92 (page 13, lines 1-6). It is respectfully submitted that the cited reference provides no suggestion for an "elastic member comprising a buffering spring member which is corrugated with a plurality of corrugations extending in a direction from an inner circumferential side to an outer circumferential side of said first diaphragm and said second diaphragm" (emphasis supplied), as now set forth in amended claim 1.

Further, the plural corrugations have been even more specifically defined such that, as claimed, the plurality of corrugations of the buffering spring member (126) are interposed in a space (124) defined between the first skirt section (122) and the second skirt section (127), so that ridge portions of the plurality of corrugations contact a wall surface of the first skirt section (122) and a wall surface of the second skirt section (127), whereas the space (124) permeates through plural groove portions of the plurality of corrugations. The ridge and

¹ To shape into folds or parallel and alternating ridges and grooves. *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

groove portions of the spring member are illustrated in the drawing below.



The Examiner has asserted that element 34 (circular main layer), or alternatively element 50 (concentric groove), disclosed in Ochs are responsive to the claimed buffering spring member.

With respect to the circular main layer 34 in the embodiment of FIG. 3, it is respectfully submitted that the layer 34 has no corrugations whatsoever, but rather, is a substantially flat or gradually bending circular member interposed between protective layers 35 and 36 of the diaphragm C.

As for the diaphragm H shown in FIG. 7, in this embodiment, a single concentric groove or single corrugation, which exists not only in the main layer 51 but also in the protective layers 52 and 53, is formed between the perimeter and the center of the diaphragm. Such a structure does not address the claimed features of a plurality of corrugations of the buffering spring

member, which are interposed in the space between the first skirt section and the second skirt section, so that ridge portions of the plurality of corrugations contact a wall surface of the first skirt section and a wall surface of the second skirt section, and the space permeates through plural groove portions of the plurality of corrugations.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Ochs does not disclose or suggest the features of amended claim 1 together with its dependent claims.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ochs in view of Anderson (U.S. Patent No. 3,307,574).

Anderson was cited by the Examiner as allegedly teaching a check valve disposed in a detector or drain port. However, Anderson cannot make up for the deficiencies of Ochs discussed above, and therefore, claim 7 is allowable at least for the same reasons as the independent claim.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention is not anticipated, and would not have been obvious to any person skilled in the art at the time the present invention was made. Reconsideration and allowance of amended claims 1, 4 and 6 to 11, along with new claims 12 to 31, is respectfully requested.

Should it be deemed that any fees, or deficiencies in fees, are due in connection with this or any accompanying paper, such fees may be charged to the attorney's deposit account no. 07-2519.

Respectfully submitted,



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